Women’s Work: Women, Business, and Economics in the United States
HIS 451/551
MW 3:30-4:45 in Bryan Building, Rm. 105
Instructor: Dr. Mandy L. Cooper
mlcoope2@uncg.edu
Zoom Office Hours: Mondays 11-12 and Tuesdays 1-3 and by appointment
UNCG is located on the traditional lands of the Keyauwee and Saura. Let us venture to honor them with our work together.

Course Description:
Women have always worked. Yet, most narratives of business and capitalism focus on the experiences of men, from the robber barons of the nineteenth century to the tech entrepreneurs of the twentieth. This class asks how focusing on women’s work and privileging women’s voices better accounts for, challenges, or changes the ways we think about the development of business and global forms of capitalism in the United States? Students will examine women’s work in domestic labor within the household, slavery, emotional and reproductive labor, factories, war production, and more. Throughout the course, students will place women’s work in the context of trade networks in the Atlantic World, the advent of slavery and the slave economy, the rise of big business and the development of the modern corporation, and the relationship between management and labor. While organized chronologically, this course will cover the following themes across time and space: women in the informal economy, housework & care as work, slavery, reproductive labor, factory work, and women in finance/traditional business domains. Beginning in the pre-colonial era and continuing to the present, this course reframes our understanding of business and the economy in the United States by placing women’s work at the center, highlighting the centrality of women’s work to the development of business and capitalism in the United States.

In this class, students will trace the changing relationship between women and work from the pre-colonial era to the present, focusing both on expectations for women’s work and the actual experience of work. Students will examine how these changes were continually shaped by the intersections of gender, race, and class, and the significance of the work that women have done in both public and private. Students will explore historical issues of gender, race, and region, asking how different facets of identity shaped the way that women experienced and interacted with the political, economic, legal, and cultural forces that shaped their lives.

Throughout the course, students will examine the history of business and economics in the US by placing women’s work at the center of inquiry. Through readings, lectures, and written assignments, students will examine the changing experiences and expectations of American women from pre-colonial times to the present and how these experiences and expectations were continually shaped by the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Students will develop skills in evaluating scholarly arguments and analyzing primary sources and historical topics to construct a historical argument in an original research paper.

Learning Goals for this Course:
**Historical Comprehension** (Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods):
- Gain a basic knowledge of women’s involvement in business in the United States
- Gain a better understanding of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality with women’s involvement in business and economics
**Historical Analysis** (Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view):

- Analyze the intersections of race, class, and gender over time and space
- Develop skills in analyzing primary sources and historical topics – and apply those skills to develop strong analytical arguments
- To analyze scholarship and a variety of media to create original arguments in writing

**Historical Interpretation** (Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing):

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate analytical ideas effectively – both in discussion and in writing
- Construct a historical argument
- Evaluate a scholarly argument and critique scholars’ interpretations of history
- Participate in an academic discussion

**Historical Research** (Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources):

- Develop an exhibit on some aspect of women and business in the United States that is grounded in primary sources and supported by relevant historiography

**Course Texts:**

Note: If you have not already purchased the book, you can get it for 40% off directly from UNC Press using the code 01HOLIDAY.

Other readings will consist of book chapters, articles, and primary sources. Book chapters and primary sources will be posted on Canvas or linked on the syllabus, and articles can be found on JSTOR. We will go over how to find and access articles through JSTOR in class.

**Class Structure:**
Each class will begin with a lecture that draws from your readings. At certain points during class, I will stop and ask you to discuss specific points from the readings and lecture. Your response and discussion should reveal your knowledge of the assigned reading. A significant portion of each class will be devoted to discussing the readings for that day; this discussion will usually fall at the end of class. Diverse and strong opinions are welcome; however, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times.

**Reading Assignments:**
Students should complete the assigned readings for a particular lecture before class. You will need to thoroughly read the book chapters and/or articles and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. We will discuss strategies for reading analytically (and quickly!) in class. If you miss a lecture, the readings will serve you well, but you should also ask a classmate if they would be willing to share a copy of their notes for that day. The primary sources are brief (generally only one to two pages each), and we will go over them in class together. Students are expected to come to class having done the required reading and prepared to thoughtfully engage in the lecture, discussion, and primary source exercise.
Blog:
Throughout the semester, each student will keep a weekly blog on course readings, discussions, and lectures. These blogs should be no more than 1-2 paragraphs long and should focus on your response (your thoughts, analysis, and questions) to the week’s readings, lectures, and discussions. For these blogs, you may include current events, images, popular culture, etc. if you see a relation to the course material. You are required to cite your sources. Each week’s blog is due on Friday by 5PM. Throughout the semester, you should also periodically comment on the blogposts of your classmates. We will be using the discussion forums on Canvas for these blogs. Please remember that what you put online is forever. You will receive more information on this assignment in class.

Leading Discussion:
The second assignment will be to lead discussion. Each student will sign up for a specific session and then lead the class discussion on the day’s readings. You will receive more information on this assignment in class.

Final Project:
Your final project will be to design an exhibit on some aspect of US women’s history prior to 1865. Your exhibit can focus on people, events, monuments, work, etc., as long as it’s related to women’s history. You will turn in a list of three possible choices for your exhibit for my approval. The exhibit should have a central narrative, a logical flow, and historical context. It should be written and presented in a style accessible to the general public. You will receive more information on this project in class.

Book Review for Graduate Students:
In addition to the above assignments, graduate students will also complete a book review (800 words) of a book that students will choose from a provided list. In the first few weeks of the semester, I will survey graduate students about their major thematic and topical interests; the list of books will be built around students’ interests.

Exams:
There will be two take-home exams, a midterm and a final. Students will be provided with essay topics in advance.

Grading Scheme for Undergraduate Students:
Participation: 10%
Leading Class Discussion: 15%
Weekly Blog Posts: 15%
Exhibit: 20%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scheme for Graduate Students:
Participation: 10%
Leading Class Discussion: 10%
Book Review: 10%
Weekly Blog Posts: 15%
Exhibit: 20%
Midterm Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 20%

**Attendance Policy:**
You are expected to attend class. However, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, if you encounter extenuating circumstances that mean that you will miss class, you should speak to me personally to make arrangements to ensure that you do not fall behind.

**Late Work:**
All papers and assignments are due at the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus. You must take the midterm and final exam on the dates listed on the syllabus.

**Academic Integrity:**
Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. Any source that you use in your work (i.e. books, documents, articles, webpages) must be properly cited. If you use someone else’s exact words they must be enclosed in quotation marks and be followed by a citation. If you put someone else’s ideas into your own words, you must also use a citation. Plagiarism includes copying and pasting any text from the internet into a document without using quotation marks and a citation.

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students’ acceptance of UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full Academic Integrity Policy, here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJyvbDHUEsxSZmFFaWFmb00/view.

**Academic Support & Disability Accommodations:**
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Should you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS - https://ods.uncg.edu/), located in the Elliot University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all students in it and will work with OARS to accommodate students’ requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations, but you do need to have documentation from OARS for whatever accommodation you have been approved for.

**COVID-19 Policies:**
As UNCG returns to face-to-face course offerings in fall 2020, the campus community must recognize and address concerns about physical and emotional safety. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG’s culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Wearing a face covering that covers both nose and mouth**
- **Observing social distance in the classroom**
- **Engaging in proper hand washing hygiene when possible**
- **Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19**
- **Staying home if you are ill**
- **Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.**
Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for maintaining appropriate social distance during class and facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seat at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking and social distancing requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow these basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and social distancing requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

**Contra Power Statement:**
As your instructor, I am committed to creating a productive and non-discriminatory learning environment of mutual respect. Title IX and UNCG’s school policy prohibit gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination for all members of the University community. Harassment can come in many forms - both direct and indirect - and can occur in subtle or overt ways. Traditionally, harassment is seen from a formal power-over structure. However, harassment can occur without a formal power structure. Contra power, when a student harasses an instructor or peer, is a type of behavior that can create an intimidating environment in and outside of the classroom. Either form of harassment can include direct or indirect comments, physical intimidation, emails, anonymous notes, and course evaluations. Both Contra power and traditional forms of harassment are prohibited and subject to the same kinds of accountability applied to offenses against protected categories, such as race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

If you experience or witness such instances of harassment, please seek out the following resources:
- UNCG Counseling Center (non-reporting agency/confidential): 336.334.5874
- Murphie Chappell, Title IX Coordinator (reporting agent): 336.256.0362 or mechappe@uncg.edu
- University Police (reporting agent): 336.334.4444

For more information on UNCG’s policies regarding harassment, visit [UNCG Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

**Classroom Conduct:**
Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class. Please review the [Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy](#) for additional information.
Health and Wellness:
Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at https://shs.uncg.edu/ or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting https://shs.uncg.edu/srp or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video
UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes: https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk

Religious Observance:
The university allows for a limited number of excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of the student. Students must notify both myself and your TA in advance of the date of the religious observance.

Policy on Children in Class:
It is my belief that if we want women in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents.
1) I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.
**Writing Center:**
The Writing Center provides support for all types of writing assignments. Since you pay for the Writing Center via your student fees, you should take advantage of it to improve your writing. Visit the Writing Center (https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/) to learn more.

**Speaking Center:**
Besides providing help for in-class presentations, the Speaking Center has useful resources and tips for students who are shy about speaking up in class or section. Visit https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/ for more information.

**Office Hours:**
I am always happy to discuss any questions or concerns you have regarding this course. I am always available during office hours, and you are welcome to schedule an appointment outside of those times by emailing me.

**History Department Websites:**
History Department website: https://his.uncg.edu
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/

**Syllabus Updates:**
Please note that readings and due dates are subject to change. I will notify you of any changes to the course schedule in class.

## Course Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 20</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong>&lt;br&gt;Questions: What is business? How have women been excluded from business &amp; from business history? How does business relate to capitalism?&lt;br&gt;In-Class Exercise – Reading Quickly &amp; Analytically. (Please bring laptop/tablet/etc. to class)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, January 27</td>
<td><strong>The Atlantic World &amp; Imperial North America</strong>&lt;br&gt;Secondary Reading: Susanah Shaw Romney, “‘She Is Now Already at Sea’ Extending Ties, Creating Empire” in New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America&lt;br&gt;Primary Sources:&lt;br&gt;-Eulalia Pérez Recalls Her Work in a Mission in Spanish California in</td>
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the Early Nineteenth Century, 1877

Monday, February 1
Women’s Work in the British Colonies
Primary Sources:
-“We Unfortunate English People Suffer Here”: An English Servant Writes Home (1756)
-Boston trader Sarah Knight on her travels in Connecticut, 1704
-Apprenticeships of Euro-American, Native American, and African American Women, New York, circa 1700

Wednesday, February 3
Women & Work during the Revolutionary Era
Primary Sources:
-“I Entered into Business, with Hope, Confidence, and Activity”: Ann Carson Becomes an Independent Entrepreneur, ca. 1810

Monday, February 8
Enslaved Women, Part 1
Newspaper Advertisements for Runaway Enslaved Women, North Carolina (161-2)
-Painting of Enslaved Persons for Sale, 1861

Wednesday, February 10
Enslaved Women, Part 2
Secondary Reading: Alexandra J. Finley, An Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and America’s Domestic Slave Trade, Chapter 4 through Epilogue.
Primary Sources:
-Dressmaker and Former Slave Elizabeth Keckley (ca.1818–1907), Tells How She Gained Her Freedom, 1868

Monday, February 15
White Women & the Business of Slavery
Secondary Reading: Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, “I Belong to De Mistis,” and “She Thought She Could Find a Better Market,” in They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South.

Wednesday, February 17
Housework as Work
Reading: Jeanne Boydston, “All the In-doors Work,” in Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic

Monday, February 22
Midwifery
51.” in *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1912*

Wednesday, February 24  
Factory Work  
Primary Sources:  
- Harriet H. Robinson remembers a mill workers’ strike, 1836

Monday, March 1  
Sexual & Reproductive Labor  
Secondary Reading: Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, “Wet Nurse for Sale or Hire,” in *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South.*  
Primary Sources:  
-Bills of Sale for Chinese Prostitutes, 1875-1876  
-Prostitution in New York City, 1858  
-Advertisements for Wet Nurses

Wednesday, March 3  
**Health & Wellness Day – No Class.**

Monday, March 8  
Women & Work during the Civil War  
Primary Sources:  
-Civil War Nurses Illustration, 1864  
-Susie King Taylor Assists the First South Carolina Volunteers, 1862-1864  
-Harriet Tubman Petitions Congress, Requesting Payment for Services Rendered During the War, circa 1898  
-“The Evil Shadow of Slavery No Longer Hangs Over Them”: Charlotte Forten Describes Her Experiences Teaching on the South Carolina Sea Islands, 1862

Wednesday, March 10  
**Take Home Midterm Due – No Class**

Monday, March 15  
Black Women's Work after the Civil War  
Secondary Reading: Tera Hunter, “‘Washing Amazons’ and Organized Protests,” in *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War.*  
Primary Sources:  
-Fannie Barrier Williams Describes the “Problem of Employment for Negro Women,” 1903  
-A Case of Black and White: White Women Protest the Hiring of Black “Wage-Slaves”

Wednesday, March 17  
Immigrant Women, Industrialization, & the end of the 19th Century  
Primary Sources:  
-Rose Cohen on the World Beyond her Immigrant Neighborhood (ca. 1897/1918)  
-Working Her Fingers to the Bone: Agnes Nestor’s Story  
-The Working Girls of Boston
Monday, March 22

Gilded Age/Progressive Era Businesswomen

Wednesday, March 24

Women Workers in the Early 20th Century
Primary Sources:
- The U.S. Supreme Court Upholds a Maximum-Hours Law for Working Women in Muller v. Oregon, 1908 (MP)
- The New York Times Reports on the Tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, 1911 (MP)

Monday, March 29

Women’s Work during the Great War
Primary Sources:
- The Woman’s Land Army of America--Training school
- For every fighter a woman worker Y.W.C.A.: Back our second line of defense
- “This Is How It Was”: An American Nurse in France During World War I
- “All the Colored Women Like This Work”: Black Workers During World War I

Wednesday, March 31

The Post-War Years & the Great Depression
Primary Sources:
- Eleanor Roosevelt Applauds the Repeal of the Married Persons Clause of the Economy Act, 1937
- Louise Mitchell Denounces the “Slave Markets” Where Domestics Are Hired in New York City, 1940
- “Susie Steno”: A Union’s View of Clerical Workers

Monday, April 5

Rosie the Riveter – WWII & Women Workers

Primary Sources:
- Mary McLeod Bethune Urges President Roosevelt to Turn to Qualified Negro Women for Help in the War Effort, 1940
- Hortense Johnson Describes Black Women and the War Effort, 1943
- Mrs. Norma Yerger Queen Reports on the Problems of Employed Mothers in Utah, 1944

**Wednesday, April 7**

Industrialization and Consumerism in the Post-War Period

Secondary Reading: Janice Williams Rutherford, “Promoting Industry to Save the Home” in *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency*

In-Class Activity - Advertisements

Primary Sources:
- Jesuita Aragon Recalls Life as a Single Mother, Midwife, and Factory Worker in New Mexico, 1950s
- “Continued Employment after the War?”: The Women’s Bureau Studies Postwar Plans of Women Workers
- “Is a Working Mother a Threat to the Home?”

**Monday, April 12**

Women in Agriculture

Secondary Reading: Marsha Weisiger and William Cronon, “A Woman’s Place,” and “Epilogue: A View from the Defiance Plateau” in *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*

Primary Sources:
- Dolores Huerta, Interview with Maria Huffman – Feb. 23, 1968
- Irina Zhorov, “Navajo ranchers are raising premium beef,” June 30, 2020, *The Counter*

**Wednesday, April 14**

Enterprising Women

Secondary Reading: Pamela Walker Laird, “Strangers on the Ladder,” in *Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin*

Primary Sources:
- TBD – Bring in current sources on enterprising women, MLM, etc.

**Monday, April 19**

The Equal Pay Act & Title VII: Legislating Women’s Work

Secondary Reading: Katherine Turk, “Feminism and Workplace Fairness” in *Equality on Trial: Gender and Rights in the Modern American Workplace*

Primary Sources:
- “The Higher, the Fewer”: Discrimination Against Women in Academia
Wednesday, April 21  The Glass Ceiling
Primary Source:

Monday, April 26  Contemporary Implications & Debates
Readings Chosen by Students

Wednesday, April 28  Review/Wrap-Up

**Final Exam Due May 5 at 6:30 PM**